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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 7 December 1990, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. FLORES BERMUDEZ (Vice-President)	(Honduras)
later:	Mr. de MARCO (President)	(Malta)

- The situation in the Middle East: reports of the Secretary-General [35] (continued)
- Programme of work

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 35 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/595, A/45/709, A/45/726)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken this morning, the list of speakers in the debate on this item will be closed today at 5 p.m. I therefore request those representatives who wish to participate in the debate to put their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): With the year that is drawing to a close the world has entered the decade of the 1990s. And what a year full of surprises, pleasant and tragic, constructive and destructive, civilized and barbaric.

It is indeed a cause for deep sorrow that the problems in the region of the Middle East have not been affected by the winds of change that have swept through many parts of our world. The question of Palestine, which is the core of the Middle East conflict, and perhaps the most prominent issue of all the oppressed and colonized peoples, remains unsolved. To the contrary, it has retrogressed and has been pushed down the scale of priorities as a result of the culpable Iraqi aggression against and occupation of my country, Kuwait. That aggression and the ensuing occupation have dealt a severe blow to the cause of the Palestinian people and has left no justification or pretext for the peoples and countries of the world that have rejected and opposed occupation.

It is indeed paradoxical that an aggressive régime, such as the one in Iraq, should find in the just cause of the Palestinian people a bargaining chip that it uses to justify aggression, occupation, pillage, destruction and intimidation against the brotherly people of Kuwait, a Muslim people, which has always been, and will continue to be, a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

It was in the soil of Kuwait that the tree of Palestinian struggle took root, grew and took off to pursue its militant revolutionary thrust, whereas the Iraqi régime has exploited for its purposes the suffering and plight of the Palestinian people which the international community has failed to address adequately as a result of Israeli intransigence and brute force. The suffering of the Palestine people was aggravated by the loss of livelihood and income by thousands upon thousands of our Palestinian brethren who were guests in Kuwait.

I wished to underline this bitter development in the Middle East region in order to highlight the fact that the invading Iraqi régime did not shrink from exploiting the suffering and wounds of the Palestinian people, and thus deepened its agony and diverted international attention from that people's just cause, thus playing into the hands of Israel and enabling it to implement its designs against the Palestinian people with impunity.

The Iraqi aggression has given Israel another excuse to pretend to question the veracity of the assertion that the question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East problem and to declare that there are other régimes, like the Iraqi régime, which indulge like the Israeli régime, in aggression, the acquisition by force of the land of others and the confiscation of their rights.

While the whole world recognizes the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence, and the establishment of its own sovereign State, we find that Israel persists in defying and spurning this firm international will. This clearly explains the severe and recurrent crises it creates and its disagreements even with those who try to help it attain genuine and enduring peace. Thus Israel continues to impede the peace efforts and to reject appeals calling for moderation and rationality.

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(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Israel has never hesitated in perpetrating any act or adopting any measure that may pour fuel on the fire in order to reverse the process of peace by miles whenever that process moved one step forward. The world has been trying in vain to persuade Israel that its alleged concept of security which it invokes to perpetuate occupation and expansion is in fact, nothing but a recipe for annihilation and destruction and that former and current Israeli practices which are predicated on this purported theory will only lead to the aggravation of the regional conflict and reinforce world-wide rejection and condemnation of Israel.

The most recent example of the atrocities perpetrated against the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation forces was the painful incident in Al-Quds in which many Palestinian youths were killed as they stood unarmed to defend the Al-Aksa Mosque which is the first kiblah in the history of Islam and now the third holiest mosque to Moslems. Thus the blood of the oppressed Palestinian people was spilled on the steps of the Al-Aksa Mosque, while the Zionist entity and its barbaric occupation forces continue to defiantly outrage the religious sentiments of more than one billion Moslems throughout the world.

Not content with its practices which breach the rules of international law and of the relevant covenants and agreements, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Israel has embarked on changing the demographic composition of the occupied territories by bringing in Soviet Jews, European Jews and others to settle them in the lands and homes of the Palestinians who are uprooted by the force of arms and stripped of their possessions in the course of an illegal operation in which all the branches of the Israeli Government are taking part even as the international community denounces and condemns such conduct.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Israel, thanks mainly to the aggressive régime in Baghdad, has exploited the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the preoccupation of the world community with the grave crisis resulting from that in intensifying the implementation of its malicious, settler-colonialist scheme in the occupied territories. Its extremist Government has become more intransigent in its policies, public decrees and secret machinations at a time when favourable international momentum had been generated by the Palestinian intifadah, the growing moderation in the official Palestinian position, the climate of international détente and increasing co-operation between the major Powers. That momentum had started to push Israel against the wall and somewhat curb its illegal policies and practices.

The position of the people and the Government of Kuwait towards the just Palestinian question is a clear-cut and firm position and is not subject to change because of any changed circumstances that others may use to undermine the ties of brotherhood, history, religion and common destiny.

Kuwait once again stresses from this rostrum the need to reach a settlement to the Palestinian question. In order to achieve this goal, we once again call for supporting the principle of convening an international conference on peace in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations for the region will not enjoy any stability, peace or security without the resolution of the Palestinian question in a fair, comprehensive and permanent manner by enabling the Palestinians to exercise their natural and inalienable right to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent State whose capital would be the holy city of Al-Quds.

The Middle East has other disturbing and bloody aspects. Israel continues to occupy the Syrian Arab Golan Heights and southern Lebanon and continues to commit

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

acts of aggression against Lebanon and interfere in southern Lebanon through its surrogates. The international community - and, specifically, the Security Council, are called upon to accord to the question of the occupied Arab territories in the Golan and southern Lebanon, utmost priority and urgency in order to bring pressure to bear on Israel to withdraw from those areas. Lebanon, whose wounds are starting to heal after a long bloody civil war, is in the process of unifying its capital, rebuilding its army and spreading its legal authority over its national territory. It deserves full support from the international community in every shape and form so that it may become once again a beacon of harmony, thought, civilization, and a model for coexistence among all sects in a very constructive manner for the good of all mankind.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

The primary task now before us is to bring pressure to bear on Israel to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and to ensure that Israel desists from interfering in the internal affairs of Lebanon and evacuates the occupied Arab territories. Putting an end to aggression, whether Israeli or, for that matter, Iraqi, would amount to providing the only safety-valve capable of ensuring the best interests of the whole region and the welfare of its peoples.

Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia): The precarious and explosive situation in the region of the Middle East, which is plagued by a host of long-standing and painful conflicts, has been dangerously aggravated by Iraq's aggression against the sovereign State of Kuwait. This has been exacerbated by the taking of hostages - an inhuman type of behaviour. Such flagrant violations of all recognized norms of international law and of fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations has been rightly condemned by the community of nations as a serious threat to international peace and security and to the emerging system of new international relations.

Mongolia has consistently supported Security Council resolutions that seek to stem the crisis and to secure Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be fully restored and a means of quelling aggression through common action must be found quickly if new world trends are to be fostered.

The crisis in the Gulf constitutes a major test of the credibility of the United Nations and of the Security Council in the discharge of their obligation under the Charter to maintain international peace and security in general and to guarantee the sovereignty and security of small States in particular. In this respect, the increasing degree of consensus between the members of the Security Council and of the United Nations as a whole on the need to put an end to this

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

aggression and to restore international legality is gratifying and impressive. My delegation supports every move by which the international community genuinely seeks to restore peace and order through the authority and strength of concerted, peaceful action.

The hazardous economic consequences of the Gulf crisis are gravely affecting the economic well-being of a great number of countries within and outside the region. This applies en masse to the oil-importing developing countries. My delegation would like to emphasize that it will take a strategy of comprehensive and long-term assistance to mitigate the shock effect of the Gulf crisis on economies, especially those of the least-developed and other low-income countries.

Mongolia advocates peaceful and negotiated solutions to all international differences, including the differences in this case. Military activity in the region, which is saturated with highly sophisticated conventional weapons, as well as means of mass destruction, may have far-reaching, but unforeseeable, economic and political consequences - quite apart from resulting in incalculable human and material loss.

My delegation fervently hopes that the United Nations machinery will prove to be effective enough to bring about a non-military solution to the crisis. Cool, clear heads, patience and the highest degree of responsibility on all sides are needed if such a catastrophe is to be avoided. My delegation welcomes every - even the slightest - indication of a trend towards a common-sense approach.

The eruption of the Gulf crisis emphasizes yet again the urgent need to find a comprehensive settlement to the complex issues of the Middle East, whose core is the Palestinian problem. We share the widespread hope that the Security Council, which reacted to the Gulf crisis with unprecedented promptness and determination, will act similarly to address the outstanding problems arising from other acts of aggression in this region.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

The Palestinian question calls for an urgent and comprehensive solution. Perpetuation of the status quo in the occupied territories will only lead to further deterioration of an already-explosive situation and widen the gulf of mistrust and hatred.

The outrageous acts of violence committed by the Israeli police at the Haram al-Shareef in Jerusalem have exacerbated the situation to a dangerous extent. Settlement of Jewish immigrants in the occupied territories has far-reaching negative implications for the search for a solution to the problem.

The latest developments highlight yet again the urgent need for the United Nations to address expeditiously the question of protecting the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. The convening of a meeting of the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 - a course of action suggested by the Secretary-General - and the deployment of a properly mandated United Nations observer team in the occupied territories could be the first concrete steps in that direction. Israel should abide by the Geneva Convention and all relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

My Government has always put forward the view that the ultimate solution to the conflict lies in Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, the exercise by the Palestinian people of the right to self-determination and recognition by all parties of the right of every State in the region to exist within internationally recognized boundaries.

The historic 1988 decisions of the Palestine National Council opened up the encouraging prospect of a lasting and peaceful solution of the crisis, on the basis of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). The valiant intifadah of the Palestinian people pinpointed the need for urgent action. However, the momentum

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

gained at that time was lost owing to the intransigence of the Israeli authorities and so-called strategic considerations of certain Powers.

Like the overwhelming majority of the international community, Mongolia maintains that an international peace conference in which all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the permanent members of the Security Council, would participate could serve as the most appropriate framework within which to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The proposal that such a conference should be convened has attracted near-unanimous support. This was confirmed yesterday by the General Assembly's adoption of a resolution on the subject that my delegation had the privilege of co-sponsoring.

My delegation, like many others, urges the Security Council, especially its permanent members, to take the necessary action to convene the conference expeditiously, as the General Assembly resolution requires.

With a view to opening up new vistas for lasting peace and security in the region, the world Organization is asked also to engage in a search for ways and means of halting the arms race and ridding the region of weapons of mass destruction, and of building confidence between the nations there.

I hope that the international community will redouble its efforts to find common ground for new security arrangements in the region - arrangements that will take into account the aspirations of all the nations concerned. In this regard, my delegation expresses its hope that the latest events in Lebanon will strengthen the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country and will contribute to an early solution of the Middle East problem. In addition, my delegation hopes that the steps that have been taken to normalize Iraq-Iran relations will lead to full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). That would augur well for a Middle East settlement.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

My delegation highly appreciates the consistent and active efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in promoting the just cause of the Palestinian people and mobilizing the support of the international community for this vital issue. That is why we were very happy to be a sponsor of the draft resolution on the activities of the Committee adopted yesterday by the General Assembly.

Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): Once again the General Assembly considers the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East". It does so this year, however, in an international environment marked by positive changes in East-West relations. Those changes have been signed and sealed recently in the Paris charter which has put a definitive end officially to the cold war which for so long had threatened both North and South and drained their resources.

We had found cause for optimism in the nascent understanding and co-operation. We had hoped that the southern hemisphere of the world was going to benefit from détente. The third world countries have borne a heavy burden of the costs of the cold war, the instability it engendered in the international order and the hegemonistic policies it bred. Although détente has led to the settlement of a number of regional conflicts, it has bypassed the situation in the Middle East which continues to be one of the most dangerous hotbeds of tension which threaten international peace and security.

The gravity of the situation in the Middle East is not of recent make. It is the inevitable result of the growth and development of zionism's expansionist and aggressive nature. Since the creation of Israel, this aggressiveness has grown steadily, in step with Israel's expansion and its increasing appetite for more Arab land.

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

When zionism found a foothold in Arab Palestine for settlers, in 1917, and was able to establish its settler-colonialist State in 1948, it resorted to violence, terrorism, displacement of the Arabs, seizing and annexing their land, plundering their property and made all this a systematic policy that it pursued relentlessly.

Israel's record of aggression is very long and very full. It has waged war continuously on the Arabs: against the Palestinian people, in 1948; against Egypt, in 1956; against Syria, Jordan and Egypt, in 1967; and against Lebanon, in 1982; all in the service of the "greater Israel" dream.

Israel has never at any time hidden its aggressive intentions even while it paid lip service to peace. The peace it speaks of, however, is but a lull, an armistice, a pause that enables it to digest and absorb the fruits of its repeated acts of aggression while retaining the "option" of perpetrating further acts of aggression, sometimes in the name of religion, sometimes in the name of "race" or at other times in the name of the contrived history which was written by theoreticians of zionism in filling the blank spaces of a counterfeit "birth certificate" form, so to speak.

Zionism is but a colonialist movement which came into being with the expansionist European colonialism of the 19th century. Since then, it has acquired the outlook, dogma and approach of European colonialism, with which it has entered into alliance, in dealing with the third world.

Israel, since its creation, has rejected every real peace effort while it went on talking of "peace", because peace for Israel would be one which would consecrate the status quo that is brought about by the force of arms in the wars it continues to unleash. After every war, Israel starts talking of peace on the basis of its latest gains in war.

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

Like any other expansionist or colonialist entity, Israel's planning and conduct focus on depriving the Arabs of all their rights in order to eliminate their national and cultural presence. Force, therefore, is Israel's favourite means to this end. The end being, of course, a purist racist society. The establishment of such a society is the ultimate goal of Zionist ideology which is completely incompatible with international moral and human values. Zionism has used the concepts of "God's Chosen People" and "the promised land" to register for itself for all time on the international real estate register the title deeds of the land of Palestine and all that surrounds it. The annexation of Al-Quds was meant to efface one of the most important parameters of Christian and Muslim civilization, since the purist Jewish State must be exclusively Jewish on both the religious and secular levels.

The annexation of the Syrian Golan was a step that was followed by further expansionist moves. It is Israel's practice whenever it speaks of "peace", to expand at the expense of our people and our territory. Today, we find that Israel, after having occupied Palestine and the Syrian Golan, remains in the south of Lebanon and calls it a "security belt" in order to camouflage its real intentions there.

The Middle East crisis is essentially a conflict between a settler group and an Arab Muslim and Christian civilization which has deep-rooted values. History's testimony is that the Arabs have contributed a great deal to the building of civilization, in the interests of mankind as a whole.

The conflict threatens the very existence of the Arabs in all the areas which are actually occupied by Israel as well as in those which Israel plans to occupy. It is a question of destiny for the Arabs because the Zionist doctrine does not even concede that there is such a thing as an Arab presence. Israeli leaders, of

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

whatever party or persuasion, continue to insist that Israel did not occupy the West Bank - including Al-Quds - Gaza and the Golan, but that it merely "liberated" them.

International public opinion, particularly in the West, which, for far too long, chose to be silent regarding the barbaric Israeli practices against the Palestinians, has begun to realize that those practices, particularly the Israeli repression of the intifadah, have proved to be as savage as those of the Nazis, involving as they do barbarous acts which fall under the heading: "crimes against humanity".

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/45/35) states that the Israeli forces of occupation, in trying to put down the intifadah, have resorted to collective punishments, which the Committee considered to be grave violations of the relevant principles of international law.*

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* Mr. Flores Bermudez (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

The report went on to say:

"Those measures included deportations, large-scale arrests, detentions, raids on homes and villages, prolonged curfews, confiscation of property and destruction of trees and crops".

The report also mentioned that

"over 13,000 Palestinians remained in prisons or detention centres at the end of 1989 and there were numerous allegations of torture and systematic ill-treatment of political detainees. ... since the beginning of the intifidah, and until 31 August 1990, a total of 10,200 Palestinians had been in administrative detention without charges or trial for varying periods. The West Bank and Gaza had experienced a total of 7,755 days of curfews, affecting hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. A total of 1,557 houses and other structures had been demolished or sealed during the intifadah, about one fifth of them for "security" reasons. The Committee was particularly concerned at the lawless and violent actions of Israeli settlers, in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, including attacks on individuals, raids on Palestinian villages and neighbourhoods, vandalism, confiscation of property, the desecration of Muslim religious sites, and activities against Christian religious property."

(A/45/35, para. 24, p. 10)

As for the situation on the Syrian Golan Heights, it has deteriorated further because 42 new settlements have been built there, the latest being a settlement called Had-nes. In the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, we read that the Israelis acted against the mayors of those settlements and intellectuals and older people. Also there has been a great

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

deal of use of tear gas. This has become a daily occurrence. As far as living conditions are concerned, they are extremely difficult because of increasing unemployment and the fact that nobody can find work unless they accept having an Israeli identity card. This makes life very difficult for them. The occupying forces have furthermore imposed on the Syrians the learning of Hebrew in their schools. That is why many of them have left school. As far as agriculture is concerned, Syrians are not entitled to cultivate any crops whatsoever. All agricultural goods are imported. Furthermore, in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, there is no free health service either for Syrians or Israeli settlers. Israelis persist in changing the demographic composition of the area of the Golan Heights in flagrant violation not only of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention but also of Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which demanded that Israel rescind forthwith its decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. The Council declared that that decision was null and void and without international legal effect.

Furthermore, the Council determined that all the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention continued to apply to the Syrian occupied territory, and that Israel has failed to implement Security Council resolution 237 (1967) stipulating the return to their native territories of those who were deported in 1967. The fact that Israel has failed to comply with these two resolutions is a flagrant violation of Article 25 of the Charter for which Israel must be made to assume full responsibility vis-à-vis the international community.

Israel, which regards itself as a cultural extension of the West, has exploited the recent positive changes in international relations which have led to détente and co-operation in achieving yet more of its expansionist goals. By manipulating the right of the individual to leave his country, it has managed to

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

start settling hundreds of thousands of Jews in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories in denial of the right of Arabs to return to the lands from which they were expelled. This is part and parcel of the racist and expansionist policies Israel pursues against the Arabs, who were made to leave or forcibly expelled.

Despite all Israeli violations of the principles of international law, the Charter and United Nations resolutions, its allies are increasing the aid they provide it with. The United States of America, for example, has recently provided Israel with Patriot missiles and has also given additional munitions, F-15 aeroplanes, helicopters, in addition to grants of $700 million in arms and munitions plus $400 million for housing the Jewish immigrants. Moreover, the United States has increased its own arsenals of arms and munitions stocked in Israel. Those arsenals will be at Israel's disposal. In addition, $3 billion are annually appropriated to Israel, more than half of which is in military aid. This aid is the direct reason that Israel is seeking to change the cultural, economic and demographic parameters of the occupied territories so as to achieve its dream of a "greater Israel" extending from the Nile to the Euphrates. It is clear that this unlimited aid to Israel cannot be conducive to peace, but on the contrary intensifies the aggression of the occupiers and their expansionism.

The Secretary-General, in his report on the situation in the Middle East, warned of the possible results of failing to establish a just and lasting peace when he said that

> "the Middle East as a whole continues to be the most explosive region of the world today. Long-standing grievances, which have festered for years, have been aggravated by an escalating arms race throughout the area, which has spawned a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. In the long run, lasting peace will come to the Middle East only when the principles of international law

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

govern the relations between States, when disputes are resolved through peaceful means, when the aspirations of those deprived of their rights have been fulfilled ...". (A/45/726, para. 29, p. 11)

It is indeed paradoxical that Israel, which claims to want peace, still rejects the idea of convening an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations. This is a conference that the United Nations has been calling for, for over a decade now. It is even more paradoxical that Israel, which claims that the problem in the region is the absence of peace agreements between it and the Arab States, does not want to admit that the real problem is its occupation of Arab lands. Peace cannot be restored unless Israel withdraws from those territories. Peace and occupation have never been known to cohabit under the same roof at any time in history.

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

The Arab position on a just and comprehensive peace has been on the table since 1982. On 9 September 1982, the Arab Summit Conference in Fez adopted a peace plan calling for Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and reaffirming the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the right to set up a Palestinian State whose capital would be Al-Quds. The Conference also spoke of a role for the Security Council in guaranteeing peace.

Furthermore, all the Arab Summits since then have reaffirmed those principles. In particular, the Summit Conference held in Casablanca in 1989 stated that the problem should be settled on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and all other relevant United Nations resolutions.

Nevertheless, Israel continues to reject a just and comprehensive peace, because it wishes to pursue its expansionist plans in the Middle East. Therefore, the General Assembly must face up to the challenge and increase its efforts to maintain international legality, represented by resolutions adopted on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The General Assembly should urge the Security Council to assume its responsibilities under the Charter and relevant United Nations resolutions with a view to ensuring a just and comprehensive peace by convening the international peace conference which the General Assembly fully endorses.

Syria re-emphasizes the need to pursue efforts to convene the conference, with the participation of all the parties to the conflict, in order to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the United Nations Charter and United Nations resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. This requires Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Al-Quds, and a guarantee of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

I had intended to conclude my statement at this point. However, the statement made by the Israeli representative this morning in which he said that the United Nations resolutions which blame Israel for the situation in the Middle East will have no place in the history of the Middle East and will be a meaningless footnote in the history of the United Nations compels me to comment. Such a statement bespeaks the contempt and hatred that Israel harbours for this world Organization without which Israel would have never existed.

I wonder how Israel, which makes light of United Nations resolutions, can continue to take part in the Organization's work. That is why we all think Israel should be deprived of its membership of an Organization from which it does not benefit and to whose well-being it does not contribute. That is why Israel is carrying out a campaign against both Arab and non-Arab States whenever a resolution does not suit it.

The Israeli statement called to mind Israeli terrorists, such as Ben-Gurion, Shamir, Eitan, Begin and Sharon. We only need to recall the bombing of the King David Hotel in Al-Quds and the murder of the United Nations mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, and his assistant, a Frenchman, the massacres of Deir Yassin and Qibya, and the most recent massacre in Al-Haram Al-Shareef, which has been condemned by the Organization.

I had not intended to refer to the occupation of southern Lebanon, but the Israeli representative reminded me of the destructive situation caused by Israel's policies in southern Lebanon and the ravenous war unleashed by Israel against that Arab people, a small people, but great because of its culture and its contribution to civilization.

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

What irked the representative of the Israeli occupation forces was that Lebanon, under President Elias Harrawi has requested the assistance of Syria in putting an end to the rebellion in East Beirut. That Syrian assistance has rid Lebanon of the most malevolent cancer that has exhausted Lebanon, sapped its strength and almost dashed every hope after the conclusion of the Taif Agreements. Ridding Lebanon of the insurgent Aoun and his henchmen has made it possible for Lebanon to rebuild its institutions and dress its wounds, particularly in the Lebanese army.

Here I should like to quote part of a televised broadcast made by President Harrawi on 3 October. He said:

"When I approved the constitutional reforms I said the Second Republic had begun. I said I hoped I would not see a difficult solution. I swore to reunite Lebanon, with its authority extending over all Lebanese territory. Lebanon intends to have its own structures, and no one, whether the militia or anyone else, can dominate Lebanon. I had to take a resolute step, and I could not have done so alone. That is why I called upon Syria and President Al-Asad to talk about Lebanon, with the desire not to divide, but to unite the territory. We are a single people, but two independent States. We wish to have assistance so that we can extend the authority of our State over all of Lebanese territory. Mr. Hafez Al-Asad's reply was to comply with the request for assistance."

Mr. Harrawi also said,

"This assistance will be extended to all political parties and the Government of National Reconciliation so that Lebanon may exercise its authority over its own territory. We should like to restore the south of our country. We wish

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

to realize the aspirations of all the Lebanese with the help of our Arab brethren who have participated with us in the peace process. I should like first and foremost to refer to the role of Syria. We were created neighbours, speaking the same language. We have the same traditions. Our people respects Syria. We shall rebuild on a solid foundation in all areas, including security and the economy, so that there can be no obstacles in the future relationship between Lebanon and Syria."

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

President Harrawi said - and here I am speaking to those in Israel who are trying to distort what has happened after ending the rebellion, because if they had truly loved Lebanon they would have tried to remedy the situation by peaceful means - that arms were being supplied constantly to the parties in the east, or money was being supplied to incite the Lebanese people to continue to kill one another. I do not wish to name them, but I can say that I hope that God will keep them far from our sight."

Mr. BARAL (Nepal): Two contradictory trends are evident in international relations today. The first relates to the encouraging rapprochement among the major international actors, which have grappled with the fundamental problems facing them since the Second World War. It would seem that the super-Powers and other permanent members of the Security Council have accepted the new world order. The near-consensus resolutions passed by the Council on numerous important issues and the mutual consultations initiated by the two super-Powers in order to reduce international tension are an indication of this.

The second trend, however, contrasts with the first, as it continues to keep alive the sensitive regional issues that defy prospects of an early solution. The emergent international order has had no impact at all on those issues. The Middle East problems range from the question of Israel's continued occupation of territories since 1967, the right of the people of Palestine to a separate and independent homeland and the crisis in Lebanon to, recently, the invasion of Kuwait by neighbouring Iraq.

Nepal, the abode of peace, the homeland of Lord Buddha, the light of Asia, who was himself the great apostle of peace and humanity, is deeply committed to respect for United Nations resolutions. Any peace formula should therefore be in keeping

(Mr. Baral, Nepal)

with the United Nations Charter. My delegation believes that the problems haunting the Middle East region should be resolved in a comprehensive and peaceful manner in accordance with Security Council resolutions. The uprising of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, which has continued for three years, represents the spontaneous rejection by the people of existence under continued Israeli occupation. It is our conviction that Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories should be accomplished on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), with full respect for the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to an independent homeland and the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to live in peace within secure boundaries.

The Middle East region is beset by problems that cause bloodletting and show no immediate signs of resolution. The Secretary-General, in his 1990 report, refers explicitly to those longstanding problems, as follows:

> "The Middle East as a whole continues to be the most explosive region of the world today. Longstanding grievances, which have festered for years, have been aggravated by an escalating arms race throughout the area, which has spawned a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. In the long run, lasting peace will come to the Middle East only when the principles of international law govern the relations between States, when disputes are resolved through peaceful means, when the aspirations of those deprived of their rights have been fulfilled, and regional security and economic arrangements - which can take into account the concerns of all the parties in the area - have been established." (A/45/1, p. 10)

When considering issues in the Middle East, the internecine crisis in Lebanon cannot be ignored. Nepal's participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and its support for the exercise by the legitimate Government of

(Mr. Baral, Nepal)

Lebanon of sovereignty over the entire territory of Lebanon and for any step designed to end the civil war is a testimony to Nepal's commitment to peace and security. My delegation wishes to emphasize once again Nepal's full and continued support for the restoration of the full sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

The role of the United Nations in ending the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq war has been commendable. Nepal welcomes the improved relations between Iran and Iraq, in accordance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987), and hopes that this is the beginning of lasting relations of peace and goodwill between the two neighbouring non-aligned countries.

The newly aggravated crisis in the Persian Gulf is adding to the festering problems of the Middle East. The Iraqi aggression against Kuwait, committed without any provocation, and the consequences triggered by that step are matters of grave concern to Nepal. If the trend towards annexing territory by force, in defiance of all norms of international law and of the United Nations Charter were to continue, the emerging trend towards co-operation and understanding now seen globally would be replaced by an even more seriously anarchical order. The peace-loving Members of the United Nations are concerned to arrest that negative trend. Nepal fully supports the relevant Security Council resolutions and calls for Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of the legitimate Government of that country. Iraq's non-compliance with the urgent appeals of the Security Council has resulted in an unprecedented military build-up in the region. This has not only caused an escalation of tension but also increased the risk of war. My Government is convinced that war is not in the interests of any country, least of all the countries of the region. Our efforts should be directed towards finding a peaceful solution to the crisis without compromising the basic principles of international relations.

(Mr. Baral, Nepal)

It is in this context that we welcome the recent proposal of the President of the United States for high-level contacts with Iraq to explore the possibilities of reaching a peaceful settlement of the current crisis in the Gulf. We also note with satisfaction Iraq's decision to allow foreign nationals to leave Iraq and occupied Kuwait. My delegation hopes that Iraq will respond positively to the new initiative and that early agreement will be reached on full implementation of the Security Council resolutions concerning the crisis.

Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran): As is reflected in the annual report of the Secretary-General (A/45/1), the Middle East is still the most explosive region of the world and is suffering from deprivation and longstanding grievances. In the past 50 years the region has witnessed many bitter events. Aggression, occupation and the displacement of millions of people are only some of the features of the Middle East region in recent decades. There is still no promising prospect of settlement of the most pressing problem in the Middle East, that of occupied Palestine. The absence of meaningful action on the part of the international community to resolve the situation in Palestine indicates that the problem of the Middle East differs from other crises principally owing to its nature and dimension and the depth of the wounds incurred.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The problem of the Middle East is neither the outcome of mere political differences nor the result of the cold war between the East and the West, but in fact had its origin in a long-term colonialist plan. By resorting to various conspiracies and to force the Zionists entered the land of Palestine and laid the foundations of a régime to usurp Palestine at the expense of the lives and livelihood of millions of Palestinians. This illegitimate Zionist invasion of Palestine has been a threat to and an actual act of aggression against all the States of the region during the past four decades.

The establishment of a greater Israel is the objective of zionism in the region. The attainment of this objective, which requires the occupation of territories from the Nile to the Euphrates, would definitely not be possible without resorting to insidious policies, inhuman measures and acts of violence. Proof of all this is the Zionist régime's past conduct.

Having demolished houses, imposed heavy taxes and fines, forced the genuine inhabitants to leave their lands and property, the Zionist régime has put Palestinians under severe economic pressures. Furthermore, the atmosphere of terror and intimidation in educational centres has seriously limited the opportunity for academic and intellectual progress and advancement for Palestinian youth. The continued alteration of the demographic status of the occupied territories is another serious source of concern. The Zionist forces have attacked mosques and Islamic sacred places, torn up copies of the Holy Koran and insulted the religious sanctities of Muslims - two examples of such behaviour are the excavations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque and setting it on fire, and the massacre on 8 October this year, which resulted in the martyrdom of 20 and the wounding of more than 100 Palestinians.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

All the reports and news received from the occupied territories by various regional and international sources over the past five decades indicate that harassment, terror and intimidation prevail in Palestine, several cases of which have been included in the twenty-second report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/45/576), in the recent report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/21919) and in the latest report of the High Commissioner of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/45/13). In addition to these pressures on the Palestinians the Zionist régime has intensified its aggressive and brutal policies against the Muslim people of Palestine by encouraging massive Jewish migration to the occupied lands and providing them with weapons.

It is regrettable that throughout all these years the international community has not taken any serious and decisive action to deal with this fundamental problem in the region. The international community should not lose sight of the fact that any solution in this context that does not deeply and fundamentally address the root causes of the crisis will not resolve the problem.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that, as long as the Palestinians are deprived of their fundamental rights and the Zionist régime continues to receive political, military and economic support from certain countries, especially the United States, peace and security will not return to the Middle East. The Islamic Republic of Iran will spare no effort in contributing to the restoration of the inalienable rights of Palestinians, including their right to self-determination and the creation of an independent Palestinian State in the entire land of Palestine.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

With regard to Lebanon, now that the rebellion of Michel Aoun that caused heavy damages and casualties has ended and positive developments towards the establishment of order and security in that country have emerged, my country expresses the hope that, in accordance with the wish and in the interest of the majority of its people, Lebanon will be able to resolve all its problems and provide the necessary conditions for its people to attain sustained progress and development. The continued occupation of southern Lebanon and the Syrian Golan Heights by the Zionist forces is of great concern and constitutes additional evidence of the true nature of the Israeli régime.

In another part of the region which is closer to our borders, another country has been subjected to aggression and occupation. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and its purported annexation was condemned by the entire international community. The Islamic Republic of Iran was the first country in the region to condemn this act of aggression. From the very beginning of the crisis, and during the recent talks with the countries of the region, including Iraq, we have stated in clear terms that the only way to solve the present crisis is through the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions. The independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait must be respected and the Iraqi forces must unconditionally withdraw to pre-1 August positions.

The presence of foreign forces on a massive scale in the Persian Gulf region has also threatened long-term security in this sensitive area. The Islamic Republic of Iran is convinced that the maintenance of peace and security in the Persian Gulf must be the responsibility of the countries in the region without foreign intervention. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has become the centre of attention all over the world and, unfortunately, has made the Zionist threat a

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

marginal issue. We hope that the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait will pave the way for Islamic countries to confront effectively the Zionist atrocities against the Muslim people of Palestine.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Despite all the complexity and contradictoriness of contemporary political processes, it is our deep conviction that the determining trend in world development is the radical, positive forward movements and changes taking place in the world today. Our planet has been caught up in very rapid changes. Literally right before our eyes, a historic transition is taking place, from military confrontation to political interaction and co-operation in the name of affirming common human values. We welcome the active participation of the United Nations in these processes.

The considerable successes the United Nations achieved over the last year, particularly in Namibia, and the progress made in settling the conflicts in Central America, Western Sahara and Afghanistan, have revealed new possibilities. At the same time, they have given every reason to make even more serious demands of the international community to secure peace in other hotspots of the planet. This, of course, is particularly true of the Middle East crisis. The fact that it remains unresolved after such a long time has once again been made evident by Iraq's aggression against Kuwait.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The Supreme Soviet and the parliament of the Ukraine on 2 August 1990, forthrightly condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and demanded the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and the full restoration of the sovereignty, national independence and territorial integrity of that country. This aggression caused such a reaction in the Security Council that it can only be described as historic. The Council condemned the aggression and demanded that Iraq immediately withdraw all its forces and called upon Iraq and Kuwait to undertake intensive talks with a view to settling outstanding disagreements. It declared that it supported all efforts along those lines, particularly efforts undertaken by the League of Arab States.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR welcomes the unity and resolve of members of the Security Council, which were evidenced by the adoption of resolution 661 (1990), by which it imposed economic sanctions in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter with a view to putting an end to the aggression and occupation.

On 23 August 1990 the Government of the Ukrainian SSR informed the Secretary-General of the United Nations of its full support for that resolution and of the steps the Republic had taken to fulfil its provisions. After the adoption of this resolution and of subsequent resolutions in circumstances that arose thereafter, a decision which we consider particularly important was taken by the Council in its resolution 678 (1990) of 29 November this year. It was the final warning to Iraq that it was inadmissible for it to continue to ignore the will of the international community. At the same time, the resolution provides a real opportunity to prevent the most tragic scenario in the development of events - the outbreak of war - and also gives sufficient breathing space to enable a peaceful political resolution of the conflict to be found.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR calls upon all the parties concerned to act in accordance with wisdom and common sense to ensure that this chance to impel the situation towards the non-military option is not lost. From this point of view we regard as very important the initiative of the President of the United States to arrange the American-Iraqi contacts. We also welcome Irag's decision to allow foreign citizens to leave that country freely in the near future.

The Ukrainian SSR is also convinced that in the interests of settling the conflict, full use should be made of the possibilities open to the Arab countries themselves.

The crisis in the Persian Gulf has once again emphasized the urgent need to step up efforts to achieve a speedy settlement of other conflict situations in the Middle East, first and foremost the problem of Palestine. If today anyone still needs any proof of the resolve of the Palestinian people to determine its own future independently, such proof is provided by the Palestinian national uprising.

On 3 September this year the intifadah had been going on for a thousand days - a thousand days of resistance which the Palestinians have shown in the face of Israel's occupation of its territory; a thousand days of suffering, pain and privation as a result of the heinous violations of the rights of the Palestinian people by the occupying force.

In the light of this fact, the conclusion drawn by the Secretary-General in his annual report on the work of the Organization is appropriate:

> "It is clear that progress cannot be made on the overall situation in the region, including the Arab-Israeli conflict, until the present crisis is set on the way to solution in accordance with the position taken by the Security Council. It is disappointing to note that an impasse has been reached in the effort to promote a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians."
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> (A/45/1, p. 10)

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

As I had occasion to state from this rostrum a few days ago, the uncompromising position of the Government of Israel on the Palestine question, its refusal to have a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its attempts to find alternative negotiating partners have simply complicated the situation and present a very dangerous and destructive policy. It is our belief that the most urgent task today is not to lose sight of earlier prospects available to us, not to allow any stagnation or, still worse, retrogression in the search for mutually acceptable solutions, to evince realism, patience and a sincere desire to move forward from confrontation to taking account of each other's legitimate interests and to seek a balance among those interests.

We would like to reiterate our conviction that because of the extreme complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict, efforts to settle it must have a specific focus. This focus can and should be an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

In this connection we are optimistic about the statement of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council on 28 September 1990 in document S/21835:

> "... They reaffirmed their determination to support an active negotiating process in which all relevant parties would participate, leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. They agreed that such negotiations should be based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council and should take into account the right to security for all States in the region, including Israel, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." (S/21835, annex, p. 3)

Now, when the Security Council and its five permanent members have demonstrated their ability to take effective and agreed action, the time has come

(Mr. Cudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

to take the necessary action to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East as envisaged in numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and further confirmed in resolution 45/68, adopted yesterday in this very Hall.

The Ukraine as a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will continue consistently to support all initiatives aimed at achieving a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Naturally, such a settlement must ensure to the Palestinian people the enjoyment of its inalienable rights, including the right to establish its independent sovereign State.

On 9 August 1990 the Permanent Representative of the United States, Ambassador Pickering, reminded members of the Security Council of the eloquent phrase of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union in the 1930s, Maxim Litvinov: "Peace is indivisible." We too are convinced that peace in the Middle East is indivisible. It can only be constructed on the basis of a comprehensive settlement of all conflicts existing there, on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

In this context we support the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon. Progress towards peace in that country should be facilitated by negotiations, excluding the use of force. We express our support for the Taif agreements as a basis for resolving the Lebanese crisis.

It is regrettable that the winds of change in international affairs have so far not had any decisive impact on the situation in the Middle East, but we cannot fail to note that the interests of restoring peace and security to the region require a broader-based approach to the problems involved.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

In conclusion, I should like once again to quote the summary of this problem given by the Secretary-General in his report on the situation in the Middle East:

"... the Middle East as a whole continues to be the most explosive region of the world today. Long-standing grievances, which have festered for years, have been aggravated by an escalating arms race throughout the area, which has spawned a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. In the long run, lasting peace will come to the Middle East only when the principles of international law govern the relations between States, when disputes are resolved by peaceful means, when the aspirations of those deprived of their rights have been fulfilled, and regional security and economic arrangements - which take into account the concerns of all parties in the area - have been established." (A/45/726, para. 29)

In our view, only such a comprehensive, all-round approach will give us any reason to hope that in the foreseeable future the United Nations General Assembly will be able to take the question of the Middle East off its agenda.

Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria): Regardless of the progress achieved in the political settlement of a number of conflicts in different parts of the world, which correspond to the positive development of international relations in general, the situation in the Middle East remains a source of tension and serious concern. Because of Bulgaria's geographical proximity to that troubled region we cannot be be an indifferent observer, but must follow closely and with apprehension the events in that part of the world.

The high degree of militarization of the Middle East, the mounting hostility and mistrust, and the volatile situation make it a potential threat to international peace and security. The instability of the situation in that part of the world was again highlighted by Iraq's aggression against Kuwait and its

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

annexation of that country, which have added a new dimension to an already highly complicated conflict in the Middle East.

Bulgaria has firmly condemned the aggression, supporting all relevant resolutions of the Security Council, and has called for the unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi troops from Kuwaiti territory and the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate Government and territorial integrity. My country is abiding strictly by the comprehensive sanctions imposed on Iraq by the Security Council, despite the severe economic losses it has suffered.

The adoption by the Security Council of resolution 678 (1990) was an event of unprecedented nature. We understand the concerns of some among us who are inclined to perceive it mostly as a prelude to using force. However, my delegation is convinced of its importance as a measure for persuading Iraq to fully implement the will of the international community. It is a demonstration of our common resolve to restore justice and discourage any potential aggressor.

The positive announcement by President Bush on 30 November and the ensuing encouraging signals from different quarters give rise to hopes that every possible effort will be made to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Gulf.

Clearly, the complex of problems that make up the conflict in the Middle East is posing one of the most serious challenges to the peace-keeping potential of the world Organization. At a time when moral values of universal significance and norms of civilized coexistence among States are gaining widespread acceptance, new blood is being shed in the Middle East and we are witnessing the occupation of foreign lands, military confrontation and the violation of basic human rights. This is enough reason for the Middle East crisis to remain high on the list of priorities of the international community.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

There can hardly be anyone today who is not convinced of the impossibility of resolving the problems in the Middle East by sheer force. We believe that the road to just and lasting peace in the region lies through the granting of equal rights and security to all nations, including their right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty within internationally recognized boundaries. It would be necessary for all parties to the conflict to understand that they share the same destiny, that there is no alternative to reconciliation and coexistence, and that they require consideration of each other's interests and a joint search for solutions in conditions of tolerance, mutual respect and non-use of force.

A key step towards a comprehensive solution of the Middle East conflict is the establishment of conditions for the implementation of the Palestinian people's legitimate right to self-determination. The selfless struggle of that heroic people, reflected in the intifadah, which is already in its third year, is more than sufficient proof of the futility of all attempts to deprive that people of the right to determine its own future. We are particularly concerned over the fact that the repressive actions of the occupation forces have resulted in civilian casualties, mostly young people and children. Very indicative in that respect is the recent tragic incident in Jerusalem, in which over 100 Palestinians were killed or injured. The protest of the entire international community and its condemnation were expressed by the unanimity with which the Security Council adopted resolution 672 (1990). The time is long overdue for Israel to understand that it should abide by United Nations resolutions and implement the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding all the territories it has occupied since 1967.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

The history of mankind has proved beyond any doubt that it is utterly impossible to quell a people's desire for freedom and independence. My Government opposes the settlement of the occupied Arab territories with immigrants, which violates the basic rights of the native population and of all the Palestinian people.

For 15 years now, the situation in the Middle East has been aggravated by the conflict in Lebanon and the tragedy of the Lebanese people. It is the view of my Government that the complete restoration of the genuine sovereignty, full territorial integrity and unity of Lebanon will be possible only through the implementation of relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Taif agreements. Recent positive developments in Lebanon give rise to hope that peace will finally reign in that devastated country.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

The over-all situation in the Middle East clearly demonstrates the need for a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict. The experience of the past decades shows that this can be achieved only through the collective efforts of all States involved.

The favourable changes in international affairs and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in maintaining world peace are conducive to activating the efforts to resolve the crisis in the Middle East. The unprecedented unanimity in the views of the permanent members of the Security Council demonstrated in recent months on important aspects of international security is highly promising in that respect. The time has come to employ a broad range of diplomatic means at the bilateral and multilateral levels with the active involvement of the United Nations, which has a strong responsibility for the fate of the Palestinian people. Bulgaria attaches particular importance to the idea of the holding of an international conference on the Middle East with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the permanent members of the Security Council. The successful holding of that conference could put efforts to solve the problems in the region on the right path. We understand that there can exist many approaches to the solution of such a complicated issue. We thus welcome all constructive ideas and proposals that may contribute to overcoming old distrusts and to starting a political dialogue between the parties to the conflict.

In conclusion I should like to express my Government's hope that all States involved in the Middle East conflict will show political goodwill, realism and respect for each other's interests in order to achieve lasting peace in the region. The Republic of Bulgaria will support any effort that will lead to a comprehensive and durable solution to this problem.

Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand): Since its inception the United Nations has had to grapple with complex Middle East issues - and never more so than in the past few months when the international community has responded with a determination to secure Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. At the same time the long-running Arab-Israeli conflict over the Palestinian question has been thrown into vivid relief by the almost daily eruptions of violence.*

In New Zealand's view both conflicts, which have an impact on the wider security of the region and have implications for global security, should be settled in their own right, and quickly. It is my Government's hope that the settlement of the crisis in the Persian Gulf might provide the impetus to concentrate international efforts on solving the Arab-Israeli problems.

As to the Gulf crisis, New Zealand stands firmly behind the 12 resolutions the Security Council has adopted. We profoundly trust that the Iraqi Government will now understand the strength of international agreement on this issue and comply immediately with the Security Council resolutions.

New Zealand is detached by geography from the place of the Arab-Israeli dispute. We are not a principal party, nor do we possess any particular insights as to how it might be solved. But our concerns relate to the security and stability of the region, to the desire to see disputes settled by peaceful means and to see that international law is upheld.

Two years ago there was a faint glimmer of hope that there would be progress made towards resolving the long-standing dispute. The constructive moves made by Mr. Arafat seemed to provide an opportunity for the commencement of meaningful negotiations that would see the peace process move forward. Unfortunately, events

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

of the past year have seen that hope extinguished. Positions have hardened, frustration has increased, the Gulf crisis has intervened and the goal of a negotiated comprehensive settlement continues to elude us.

Over the past 12 months we have witnessed an increasing cycle of violence and retribution killings in Israel and the occupied territories. Violence and repression have begotten further violence as the aspirations of the Palestinian people have remained unfulfilled and Israel continues to fear for its security.

The spontaneous Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, stemming from 23 years of frustration and despair, is now in its fourth year. More than 750 Palestinians have been killed by the occupying Israeli security forces. The intifadah continues to be fuelled by unsatisfied political demands, denial of basic human rights, despoliation of resources, destruction of settlements, the continued closure of schools and universities and other collective-punishment measures.

This bleak and dangerous situation underlines the urgent necessity for parties to make every effort to reach a mutually agreed settlement.

It is some 23 years since the Security Council adopted resolution 242 (1967), setting out the basis for a just and enduring peace in the Middle East. In my Government's view those principles remain as valid today as they were then. As we all know, the resolution emphasizes the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war. It also emphasizes the need to work for a just and enduring settlement in which every State in the region could live in security within recognized boundaries and free from threats of aggression. The New Zealand Government continues to support the just implementation of that resolution and the need to achieve a peaceful settlement embodying the principles laid down in it.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

Accordingly, we believe that Israel should withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967. We regret that it shows no sign of being willing to do so and that its activities in the occupied territories, such as the building of settlements, point in exactly the opposite direction. Its activities there call into question its willingness to negotiate on the principles almost universally accepted by the international community as the basis for a just settlement of the dispute. Nor can New Zealand accept or recognize Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem. Given the conflicting claims on the City, Israel's actions pose a serious obstacle to achieving a lasting peace.

Essential to any fair solution to the dispute is the recognition of the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people. In my Government's view that should include the right to self-determination and the right to establish their own independent State, if that is their wish. It is a matter for them to determine in the context of an overall peace settlement. It is the key political issue that lies at the heart of the dispute, and it requires a political solution.

New Zealand has always sought an even-handed approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It therefore believes that any settlement must also recognize the sovereignty and independence of Israel and its right to live in peace free from external threat. Regrettably, not all States of the region have shown that they unequivocally accept that right. On the other hand, we question the extreme measures that Israel itself has taken to guarantee its security, measures that are in violation of international law and Security Council resolutions.

In this regard New Zealand urges Israel as the occupying State to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, to apply its provisions in full and to abide by Security Council resolution 672 (1990). We cannot accept

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

Israel's practices to suppress the intifadah. The reports of the human rights abuses, collective punishments and other activities in the occupied territories are of deep concern to my Government.

New Zealand believes that the United Nations can play a constructive role in assisting to find a solution to the dispute. An international peace conference held under United Nations auspices and involving the main parties offers a way forward to reaching a just and comprehensive solution. That conference must include genuine representatives of the Palestinian people, including members of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), for without PLO participation it is hardly credible that an enduring solution could be reached.

New Zealand is also fully supportive of the Secretary-General's efforts over the past year to respond to the situation in the occupied territories and the recent serious incident in Jerusalem. We are disturbed by Israel's refusal to accept the Secretary-General's mission to the region, which had the endorsement of the Security Council.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

My Government continues to look for signs of a peaceful solution to this dispute that recognizes the mutual interests of the main parties. We also look to Israel to desist from its abhorrent practices in the occupied territories and to recognize that ultimately its own welfare and security will be guaranteed only when there is peace and justice for the Palestinian people. New Zealand will be supportive of peaceful and constructive measures by either side to break the current dangerous stalemate.

Mr. AKSIN (Turkey): During the course of this century, the Middle East has been one of the most tormented regions of the world. It is very regrettable that, because of the unresolved conflicts, the region's rich resources have been used in large measure for military purposes while the needs of the people, who have lived in hardship and suffering, have remained unmet. As a consequence, the Middle East is in a state of tension that carries with it the ever-present danger of a major explosion.

Because Turkey is contiguous to this region, its security is directly affected by the conditions prevailing in the area. Given our close historical, political and economic ties with the countries of the region, it is natural that we should view the present situation with deep concern. We have a very strong interest in seeing peace and justice reign in the region, and we are prepared to work actively to secure this objective, regardless of the manifest difficulties.

More than 40 years have elapsed since the General Assembly adopted its initial resolution concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. Over this period the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine have been a continuous focus of concern for the international community. Throughout the years the United Nations has been able to draw up the principles on which a comprehensive, just and lasting solution should be based. Nevertheless, the efforts of the international community

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

have been vain, because of Israel's hard-line policies, which have blocked the initiation of an effective peace process in the Middle East.

The developments of the last year have provided the international community with another opportunity to express its feelings of frustration at its inability to see the prospect of an early settlement of the Middle East problem, at the heart of which lies the question of Palestine. The positive policy adopted by the Palestinian leadership following the proclamation of the independent State of Palestine was not met with a reciprocal gesture from the Israeli side. The Israeli Government failed to take advantage of the proclamation of an independent State of Palestine and of the adoption by the Palestine National Council of the principles of a peaceful solution of the Middle East question on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The lack of a proper negotiation mechanism has been one of the major obstacles to addressing the substance of this question. In the absence of a dialogue, suspicions have deepened, creating an atmosphere conducive to unproductive rhetoric or, worse still, violence. Despite this reality, the Israeli authorities are unable to see that with the proclamation of a Palestinian State, all the parties to the conflict finally have a new interlocutor in the Palestine Liberation Organization, an interlocutor which favours the settlement of the issue through peaceful means. By missing this historic opportunity, Israel is responsible for the dangerous stalemate that has blocked the peace process. The suspension of the dialogue between the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organization is another unfortunate development which we hope is only of a temporary nature.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

Turkey is very disappointed that the present deadlock in the peace process remains unbroken. The Secretary-General rightly emphasizes in his report that

"... I could not but be concerned at the fact that valuable time was passing and that the willingness to negotiate that existed at that time would be eroded by bitterness resulting from events on the ground." (A/45/726, para. 26)

Time is running out and a major effort must be made to overcome the recent setbacks if we seriously want peace in the region. It is in this spirit that we appeal once again to Israel to reconsider its position and to choose reconciliation rather than confrontation, so that peace can finally be attained in the Middle East and all, including Israel, will be able to coexist in peace, stability and security.

Turkey is convinced that the solution to this problem has to be based on negotiations among all the parties, conducted in good faith within the framework of an international peace conference. In this framework, we have noted with hope and optimism the reference made by the Secretary-General in his report to the existence of

"unanimity within the Security Council that efforts must be continued on an urgent basis to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the situation in the Middle East ... in all its aspects." (ibid., para. 28)

During the year under review the rejection of peace initiatives by Israel has been coupled with its iron-fist policy towards the Palestinians living in the occupied territories. The Israeli authorities have persisted in their policy of quelling the Palestinian uprising with increasingly harsh measures. The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories gives a harrowing account of the cruel methods used to suppress demonstrators and strikers.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

The deportation of Palestinians, the increased restrictions on educational institutions and health and social welfare organizations, as well as constant harassment, have produced intolerable conditions for the Palestinian people. Despite the vigorous opposition of the international community, and in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel has continued to insist on its policy of establishing settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

The indiscriminate use of violence aimed at suppressing the intifadah at all costs has resulted in a heavy toll of casualties, culminating in the tragic events that occurred at the Al-Aqsa mosque on 8 October 1990. Turkey strongly condemned the violence caused by the Israeli security forces, which led to the death of more than 20 Palestinians and the wounding of many more, and called for an end to all the harsh practices directed against Palestinian civilians.

The level of tension and violence in the occupied territories has once again demonstrated the urgent need for measures to protect the Palestinians. In this connection, the sensitivity shown by the Security Council in adopting resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990), with their emphasis on the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, is a welcome first step in this direction.

Turkey has consistently advocated a just settlement of the problem of Palestinian refugees, who have undergone untold sufferings for more than four decades. We feel duty-bound, as we did during the last debate on this question in the Security Council, to extend our active support to all the international efforts aimed at alleviating this human tragedy, with the understanding that the measures to be adopted to this end cannot be a substitute for a political solution to the

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question of Palestine. In this context, we fully agree with the Secretary-General when he points out in his report (S/21929 and Corr.1) that the implementation of practical measures for the protection of Palestinians will not bring to an end the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, which is essentially political in nature.

Turkey holds the view that a lasting and equitable solution of the question of Palestine depends on the withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and recognition of the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to live within secure and internationally recognized borders.

I would like to conclude my statement by referring briefly to the situation in Lebanon. Turkey has been following with keen interest the developments in that country. Turkey supports all efforts to re-establish the constitutional order in Lebanon through national reconciliation and in keeping with the principle of preserving the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the country. We have welcomed the Taif agreement as a positive step in this direction.

It is our earnest hope that that agreement will be fully implemented at an early date so that peace and stability may be restored in that war-torn country. We consider the recent changes in the Lebanese political scene and the removal of the militias from Beirut to be positive steps. We hope that these developments will contribute to the restoration of the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon, and to national reconciliation in that country.

Mr. TÖRNUDD (Finland): Since last year's general debate on the Middle East the situation in the region has dramatically changed. Instead of one conflict there are now two: the long-lasting Arab-Israeli conflict and a new, unexpected and very dangerous crisis in the Persian Gulf area, where one independent Member of the United Nations has been occupied by its neighbour. The Security Council has taken important steps in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter in order to ensure the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. We fully support those steps, which aim at an early peaceful settlement of the dangerous crisis.

We have received with satisfaction the news indicating that foreign nationals held against their will in Iraq and in occupied Kuwait will be permitted to leave freely. This is a step in the right direction.

Although the crisis caused by the Iraqi invasion has garnered much of the attention of the international community in recent months, the acute Israeli-Palestinian conflict must not be simply forgotten or set aside. The political manoeuvring or the intransigence of a new occupier in the region should not lead us to give up the search for ways to alleviate the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is my intention to focus now on the latter.

We regret to note that what was conceived two years ago as the beginning of a process of conciliation between the Palestinians and the Israelis has come to a halt. No viable peace process is under way; no signs of serious attempts to find a political settlement can be detected. The crisis over Kuwait may overshadow the prospects for peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict but it does not make peaceful settlement of the latter less necessary or even less urgent.

The overall situation in the territories occupied by Israel has been constantly deteriorating. The events in Jerusalem on 8 October and the cycle of violence that has followed are, again, a tragic reminder of the intolerable situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Meanwhile, tension is

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increased by the persistence of the Israeli settlement policy in these territories. All these developments require the international community to take steps to arrange monitoring and protection for Palestinian civilians as well as to address the underlying political problem seriously.

Finland has often emphasized that in order to set a peace process in motion it is vital that the Israelis and the Palestinians establish contacts for a dialogue between themselves. Much more should be done to create a sense of mutual confidence and respect. For this purpose scrupulous observance of the Fourth Geneva Convention by Israel is of the utmost importance. The senseless cycle of violence should be brought to a halt.

In our view the negotiations between the parties concerned would be best arranged in the form of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties concerned as well as the permanent members of the Security Council. This presupposes the right of the Palestinians, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as their most significant representative, to take part in the negotiations on their own future.

The universally accepted principles for a peaceful settlement are well known: Acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible and therefore Israel must withdraw from territories occupied by it since 1967. A comprehensive, just and lasting settlement can only be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), with all States in the region, including Israel, having the right to exist within secure boundaries. Also, the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination, must be respected.

In the troubled Middle East region signs of hope have finally emerged in Lebanon. We welcome the recent positive developments there and urge all parties to act with restraint and responsibility so that the fragile foundations for peace and

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stability will not be destroyed. The process of safeguarding the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Lebanon must continue, unhampered, until it is completed.

The international community has witnessed a series of positive changes in recent years. The record of political wisdom shown has been impressive. The Middle East area must not remain an exception. It poses a huge challenge for the countries in the region, for the international community and for the United Nations. It has to be seriously addressed.

An argument has been raised that the international community, as represented in the different organs of the United Nations, does not enjoy the confidence of one principal party. Let me only point out one thing: confidence is always a two-way street; harsh words tend to be answered by harsh words.

The presence of the United Nations in the Middle East is already manifold. Three peace-keeping operations are in the area with the aim of maintaining stability in order to give peace a chance. Several important United Nations organs are involved; they are engaged in valuable work of a basically humanitarian nature. The peace process itself requires strong political will and the engagement of those principally concerned. However, we feel that the enormous possibilities for involving the United Nations in the peace process should also be fully utilized.

The record of United Nations involvement in other conflict areas is convincing. Many peace processes have been successfully completed or are well under way elsewhere. Different conflicting interests have been reconciled in order to serve the most important interest of all: a peaceful settlement. This, in our view, should be the model for the Arab-Israeli conflict too. The parties and the international community have to intensify their efforts towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East.

Mr. ERDOS (Hungary) (interpretation from French): The major positive changes of 1990 have created conditions favourable to the settlement of regional crises and of tension throughout the world. The end of East-West confrontation and the emergence of a new international era have enabled the United Nations to play a more important, more active role in the peace process. Indeed, we can note with satisfaction that most of the regional crises on the United Nations agenda are on the way to peaceful negotiated solutions.

It is therefore highly regrettable that this positive climate has not yet reached the Middle East, where conditions remain alarming and a source of major concern for the entire international community. We note that while the walls of sterile ideological and military division have been crumbling in Europe and while the animosities and prejudices of the cold war have yielded to growing trust and co-operation, violence continues to sweep the Middle East and new tensions provoked by Iraq's aggression against Kuwait have placed new obstacles in the way of a just settlement of the Israel-Arab conflict and of the Palestinian problem.

Hungary is deeply convinced that questions relating to the Middle East crisis can be resolved only by peaceful means, and through negotiations. If there is any lesson to be learned from this decades-old crisis it is that. Even the Gulf crisis cannot prevent the international community from considering the unique Israeli-Arab conflict, which seems to be resistant to the assaults of a more co-operative and conciliatory age, with a view to initiating an effective political process to bring about a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Certain events of the past, however, gave rise to hope that the Middle East could emerge from the impasse in which it has been stalled for so many years. In that regard, I would recall the Palestine National Council's acceptance in 1988 of

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Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the renunciation by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of terrorism, acts which at the time appeared to be important initiatives that could make it possible to embark on a settlement process. I also recall the Israeli proposal to hold elections in the occupied territories, the direct dialogue opened between the United States and the PLO and the proposals made to begin a dialogue among the parties directly concerned. All those initiatives were viewed by many Governments, my own included, as possible contributions to a climate of trust in the region, which could eventually have led to launching the peace process for which we have all hoped, in the interests of the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples, which have suffered so greatly as a result of the tribulations that have afflicted the region.

Unfortunately, events have not lived up to our hopeful expectations. The efforts early this year to bring about an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue are deadlocked, and talks between the United States and the PLO have been suspended. The situation in the occupied territories has constantly deteriorated, and the Security Council has had to devote increased attention to questions of the safety and protection of the Palestinian population, particularly following the serious and tragic events of 8 October in Jerusalem. The prospects for a settlement remain uncertain. The Palestinian problem remains unresolved. Israel's occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories continues, as does the uprising of the Palestinian population against that occupation. Measures of territorial annexation and the situation in southern Lebanon are further sources of instability and tension necessitating a large-scale United Nations peace-keeping operation in the region. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the members of the international contingents serving the cause of peace in the region and to reaffirm our support for those United Nations peace-keeping forces.

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Because of its geographical proximity to and its historical ties with the peoples and nations of the Middle East, Hungary has a sincere interest in a speedy and peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict. Our approach to the complex problems and multiple sensitivities in that part of the world is based on our desire to promote trust between the parties and to help ease tension in the region.

Hungary fully supports a just settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the Palestinian problem on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. In that context, I should like to express our support also for the idea of convening, at an appropriate time, an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization. We believe a settlement of the conflict should be based on the principles laid down by the international community, namely the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure, recognized and guaranteed boundaries in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the right of all peoples in the region to justice, which includes the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination and its political rights.

Hungary is fully aware of the complexity of the situation in the Middle East, and considers that an outrage and a new injustice were committed against the Palestinian people and the other peoples of the region with the invasion of Kuwait by its neighbour to the north. That invasion has further delayed and complicated the search for ways to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict and to settle the Palestinian question, which is central to that conflict. For Hungary, a small country, the maintenance and application of international law and legality in relations among States are and will remain vital considerations. For that reason,

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the Hungarian Government condemned without delay Iraq's aggression against Kuwait and offered full support for Security Council resolutions aimed at eliminating the aggression and its consequences, including Security Council resolution 678 (1990), which, as a sign of good will, gives Iraq one last chance to comply fully with previous resolutions by 15 January 1991.

While expressing the hope that Iraq will seize that opportunity, Hungary wants to make it clear that it is in full agreement with that most recent Council resolution authorizing the use of all necessary means to enforce and apply the resolutions of the Security Council and to restore international peace and security in the region.

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Barely five weeks remain for the will of the international community to be fully respected. We want to say from this rostrum that any solution to the Gulf crisis must be within the framework strictly defined by the Security Council. This cannot be said to be an attitude of intransigence or inflexibility. For more than four months the language used by the United Nations has been aimed simply and solely at bringing Iraq to reason, demonstrating the extreme gravity of the action undertaken by Baghdad, showing the repugnance of the international community in the face of this defiance and eradicating from international practice such indescribable, criminal actions, whose sole aim is to obliterate from the face of the earth an independent sovereign State Member of the United Nations. Although this has been repeated so often recently, the fact is that for as long as this crisis persists, and even afterwards, it is something of which peole need to be reminded. What makes this matter even more outrageous is that the law of the jungle has been applied by an Arab country against another Arab country.

I would add that the repeated references to history coming to us from Baghdad, about the former frontiers and the existence or absence of certain territorial entities, to justify the aggression and Iraq's envelopment of the State of Kuwait in its deadly embrace are to us in Hungary particularly detestable, because, with the wisdom learned from our own historical experience, we reject any attempt, in Europe, the Middle East or anywhere else, to change by force existing frontiers or existing State structures. We believe that anyone who knows anything about the contemporary history of Hungary will appreciate the moral force of this unequivocal position, which we are determined to maintain in the international mobilization against aggression.

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Hungary is ready to participate as far as it is able in the performance of the tasks envisaged in Security Council resolution 678 (1990). We are aware that we in Hungary alone will not get very far on the basis of this determination. It was probably the same feeling that motivated the Kuwaitis when they faced the invasion. But, like our Kuwaiti friends, we know that we are not alone in wanting to see civilized order prevail in the world, which is torn apart by so many problems. I cannot think of any one of the countries that make up the United Nations that is really ready to sacrifice the principles upon which are based both international life and the very existence and identity of the members of the community of nations.

The five weeks which remain before the middle of January provide an opportunity, not for secret machinations and manoeuvres, bargains and quid pro quos on matters of principle, but for honest discussions about what is to be done to restore the status quo prior to 2 August 1990. This is not ultimatum language. No, it is simply doing justice and realizing what has been going on for long months past in the Gulf. It would be fatal to act otherwise. It would be fatal to act otherwise. Everybody is now watching the region. We want to avoid the worst, but not at any price. We dare to hope that reason will prevail in Baghdad, that there will be increasing signs of moderation and acts of realism in Iraq and that we shall all draw the necessary lessons from these explosive events that have taken us to the very edge of the abyss. The aggression and its consequences must be brought to an end. This is the clear and simple message that must be delivered to the banks of the Tigris.

The recourse to violence and force only move us further away from a settlement of the Israel-Arab conflict and the question of Palestine. Instead of having a calming effect, all it does is increase hatred and mutual suspicion and inflame

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feelings. The true, lasting solution can only be brought about by means of a delicate political and diplomatic process, in which the United Nations must play an active part. Our country believes that the efforts of the Security Council and the Secretary-General are very important factors in eliminating confrontation, hostility and mistrust, establishing mutual respect and building a certain degree of trust between the parties. If this objective is to be achieved, the parties themselves must make the necessary efforts, developing new and more flexible approaches and abandoning old prejudices and stereotypes. In general, international conditions are now conducive to such action by the parties to the conflict and nothing - not even the events in the Gulf - must be allowed to prevent the international community from doing everything in its power to facilitate the processes which can lead to an equitable solution of the Middle East crisis.

Mr. ADNAN (Malaysia): In the last few months we have witnessed the United Nations making good progress towards addressing problems, as seen in the case of the peace plans in Namibia and Cambodia. The unity and resolve of the Council in confronting the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait has further renewed faith in the revival of the concept of collective security and the ability of the United Nations to live up to the expectations of its founders as the guardian of international peace and security. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the United Nations and other initiatives, the situation in the Middle East continues to remain in the forefront of our agenda. It has now been there for over four decades; yet the Arab-Israeli conflict remains as intractable as ever. Recent trends, which have brought promising developments towards the solution to other conflicts, have not had their impact on the problems of the Middle East. Rather, the incremental effects have highlighted the intransigence of Israel and its contempt for international law and United Nations resolutions.

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In his report on the work of the Organziation the Secretary-General makes the following statement

"The Middle East as a whole continues to be the most explosive region of the world today. Longstanding grievances, which have festered for years, have been aggravated by an escalating arms race throughout the area, which has spawned a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. In the long run, lasting peace will come to the Middle East only when the principles of international law govern the relations between States, when disputes are resolved through peaceful means, when the aspirations of those deprived of their rights have been fulfilled, and regional security and economic arrangements - which take into account the concerns of all the parties in the area - have been established." (A/45/1, p. 10)

The situation remains volatile, and the longstanding problem of Palestine remains as the core of the conflict in the Middle East. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region will not be achieved without the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and until Israel makes an immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories.

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Israel, therefore, has to realize that it has to change its policy drastically and work seriously towards these objectives, particularly in view of the Palestinians' willingness to advance the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the problem. In the meantime, Israel has to cease its violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and its policy to alter the demographic composition of the occupied territory.

The nineteenth session of the Palestinian National Council, in November 1988, courageously recognized United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). This offered a new opportunity towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. It is regrettable that the Israeli response so far has been negative and that instead it continues to pursue an iron-fist policy in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories; it continues to thwart international efforts to bring peace to the Middle East. It also continues to occupy southern Lebanon and chooses to attack Lebanese territory at will without regard to civilian casualties and to Lebanon's territorial integrity. This occupation is preventing the legitimate Government of Lebanon from exercising effectively its right as a sovereign and unified State. Israel has been able to ignore international law owing to the inability or unwillingness of certain permanent members of the Security Council to act firmly and even-handedly in the larger interests of all States in the region.

The continuing deterioration of the situation in the Middle East is the result of the intransigence and expansionist policies of Israel. It is relying on its military strength, through which it perpetrates aggression against and occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories. The central aim of Israel's policies is to continue denying the Palestinian people their inalienable rights, their self-determination and their independent State. For over 23 years the Israeli illegal occupation of Palestinian land has been accompanied by policies and

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practices that seek to crush Palestinian aspirations and to liquidate the Palestinian identity. Israel has spurned every peace initiative that offers a comprehensive and durable settlement of the conflict.

Faced with Israel's inflexible position, the Palestinians had no other recourse but to launch the intifadah, which on 9 December 1990 will enter its fourth year. It shall continue as long as Israel does not abandon its harsh and unjust measures and persists with its policy of mass arrests, deportations, confiscation of properties, demolition of houses and establishment of illegal Jewish settlements. Israel must realize that the Palestinians, as they have courageously proved, will not succumb to such repressive measures. It must also realize that the intifadah can only end, not through further oppression, but by Israel itself addressing the grievances of the Palestinians and correcting the injustices that have been imposed on them.

Malaysia joins the international community in condemning the brutal policies of the Israeli occupying authorities, which are flagrant violations of fundamental human rights and of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Malaysia also wishes to reaffirm its call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing. The Conference should be vested with full authority, in order to achieve a comprehensive and just solution based on the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and all other occupied Arab territories. It must restore the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with United Nations resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine

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and the situation in the Middle East. Malaysia fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to convene the Conference, which has been overwhelmingly endorsed by the international community. Malaysia calls upon Israel and those who support its prevarication to lend full assistance and co-operation to the Secretary-General to make the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East possible.

Mr. MAKKAWI (Lebanon): As this is the first time I have addressed you, Sir, in your capacity as President of the General Assembly, I should like to congratulate you on the exemplary way in which you are guiding our work. I wish you the greatest success in your endeavours in guiding the General Assembly at this particular juncture, which in retrospect will prove to be a watershed for the fate of peace in the Middle East. I wish also to thank the Secretary-General for the substance and objectivity of his report on agenda item 35, document A/45/726 of 26 November 1990, and for the views he expressed therein.

Now more than ever the action or inaction of the United Nations will have a profound effect on the Middle East, and the international community must demonstrate its ability to presage the dramatic course of events about to unfold.

No less than a full consolidation of efforts is required of this session of the Assembly to meet, once and for all, the objectives of past sessions. Last year, in paragraph 1 of resolution 44/42, our international Organization reaffirmed the need

> "to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine,"

and called once again

> "for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East."

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The Assembly also reaffirmed that Israel must withdraw from Palestinian and all other Arab lands it has occupied since 1967, and dismantle its settlements in these territories.

Allow me to take this opportunity to mention that the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon notwithstanding, the Lebanese in recent days have had some reason for optimism. Last month Lebanon's Government was able to reunite the Army and extend its authority over the capital city after 15 years of conflict. It succeeded in creating a Greater Beirut free from all militias and, as its next step, the central Government is planning to extend its domain over the Lebanese heartland, including southern Lebanon.

For this dramatic and positive development my country is deeply grateful to the High Arab Tripartite Committee for its efforts last year in the city of Taif which helped produce the Document of National Accord. Fully endorsed by the United Nations and the League of Arab States, this Document has on many occasions been reaffirmed by the Security Council as Lebanon's only viable path towards reunification and peace.

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Indeed, my country has much to be thankful for, but still we are deprived of the full realization of our joy. For 12 years now Israel has continued to occupy southern Lebanon, in violation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the immediate withdrawal of Israel's forces from all Lebanese territory. Following the central Government's announcement of its plan to assume full control over Greater Beirut and rid it of all arms and militias, Israel declared its adamant refusal to withdraw from southern Lebanon and its intention to perpetuate its occupation. I quote the Israeli Defence Minister, Moshe Arens, as reported by The New York Times of 9 November 1990:

> "Israel will not let the Lebanese Government regain control of the area the Israelis claim as a 'security zone' in southern Lebanon ... the defence of Israel's northern border is based on Israeli and South Lebanon Army control of the security zone and the Jezzin area."

Short of invading deeper into my country, or waging another full-scale war, as it did in 1982, Israel could have done little more to undermine the newly reborn Lebanese body politic or curtail its sphere of influence in the southern region. Its threat must be analysed for its manifest content, which is the coveting of Lebanon's southern flank and waters, and for its latent content, which, as indicated by the well-timed delivery of the Israeli announcement, is the desire once more to destabilize Lebanon hence facilitating Israel's incorporation of the South.

Israel's motives must be examined further in the light of its dream of expanding to create a "Greater Israel". While it anticipates the arrival of 400,000 Soviet and other immigrants next year, it has been able to accommodate only a fraction of the more than 150,000 who arrived this year. Israel's cities of tents and its dearth of housing and jobs are well documented, and thus far its

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policy has been to alleviate this paucity by creating homes and employment outside Israel, in the occupied Palestinian and Syrian territories.

Given the Israeli Defence Minister's recent announcement, Lebanon has good cause to fear that its southern region may be the next to succumb to an onslaught of Jewish settlers bearing arms. The Israelis have already set up their army, banks, prisons, transportation, communications and other institutions in southern Lebanon, and now have only to inaugurate the Lebanese land with settlements and people. Israel's policy vis-à-vis its neighbours is aptly described, therefore, as "the conquest of living space".

At its 44th plenary meeting this Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to peace in the Middle East by adopting four resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East - resolutions that called once again for Israel's withdrawal from Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon.

It is obvious to most members of the Assembly that this is a prerequisite for peace, but the Israeli Permanent Representative, in his statement to the Assembly on 30 November 1990, offered another opinion: that the very core of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the refusal of the Arab world to come to terms with Israel's right to exist.

A number of facts, however, prove that this negative logic, which is typical of the Israeli mindset, is incorrect. First, Israel minimizes the authority and role of the United Nations as the bastion of international law and the guardian of territorial integrity. Secondly, the logic ignores the fact that all Israel's neighbours want peace, including Lebanon, which reaffirms its commitment to the

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General Armistice Agreement of 1949. Thirdly, at the Algiers conference of the Palestine National Council in December 1988, the leadership of the glorious and noble intifadah - the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - unequivocally recognized Israel's right to exist. Fourthly, Jordan - Israel's neighbour to the north-east and south-east - has kept a peaceful border with Israel for decades, and abides by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which guarantee the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. Fifthly, Israel enjoys an open border with Egypt on the basis of its fulfilment of the Treaty exchanging the entire Sinai Peninsula for peace.

Israel also attempts to perpetuate the myth that it is pursuing peace - albeit peace without compromise. The Israeli acting Permanent Representative issued the following statement, which figures in the Secretary-General's report on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East:

> "In seeking to advance the peace process the Government of Israel adopted on 14 May 1989 a peace initiative 'which deals with the continuation of the peace process; the termination of the state of war with the Arab States; a solution for the Arabs of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district; peace with Jordan and a resolution of the problem of the residents of the refugee camps in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district'." (A/45/709, para. 4)

Israel's persistent use of the biblical names Judea and Samaria clearly indicates that it aims to incorporate these lands and make them part and parcel of a Greater Jewish State. And may I remind the Assembly that, while Israel has long advocated direct negotiations with the Palestinians, its promises have never been brought to fruition. Clearly, Israel lacks the commitment to make any concessions for peace and has chosen instead to sabotage all initiatives that come close to meeting its ever-elusive terms.

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Three cases in point. First, Israel refuses to honour Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), to which the Israelis originally agreed, which call for a land-in-exchange-for-peace solution. Secondly, historically Israel has refused to negotiate with the Palestinians until they recognize its right to exist. In November 1988, however, at the Algiers meeting of the Palestine National Council, Yasser Arafat formally and unequivocally announced the PLO's recognition of Israel's right to exist. Despite this Israel refuses to negotiate with the Palestinians, who have made concession after concession in an attempt to meet the ever-changing demands of their occupiers. Meanwhile, it is the Israelis' perennial claim that it is the Palestinians who are not meeting the necessary requirements for peace. Thirdly, another case in point is Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's four-point peace plan, which was abandoned when Israel put impossible conditions on the proposed negotiations by insisting on dictating with which Palestinians it would enter into dialogue. Later, even the Baker plan, as put forward by the United States Secretary of State, was flatly denied.

For these and other reasons, Lebanon is sceptical of Israel's call for peace - and we may add to the list of complaints about Israel that it rejects out of hand the convening of an international peace conference to be held under the auspices of the United Nations.

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The Lebanese Government fully supports the idea that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East should be held and that a preparatory committee to expedite the process should be established. However, while Lebanon agrees in principle to the convening of the Conference with a view to finding a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East issue in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions on the matter, it would like to urge this international Organization, in the strongest possible terms, not to link our conflict with Israel with the Middle East issue, and to give consideration instead to addressing, separately and urgently, the issue of Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon and its recent bellicose announcement that it will keep southern Lebanon under its occupation and control.

As stated in Lebanon's reponse to the Secretary-General's request for input on the matter of convening the Conference,

> "Lebanon does not consider that it has a territorial problem, that is to say a problem regarding territory with any State whatever, that is open to discussion or negotiations. Its boundaries are established and internationally recognized, and it is committed to its right to full sovereignty and independence. The question of Israeli occupation and Israeli practices in southern Lebanon should be addressed by giving effect to the will of the international community as expressed in Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), which call for the full and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from Lebanese territory, by enabling the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon to carry out in full the task entrusted to it by deploying up to the internationally recognized boundaries and ensuring international peace and security, by assisting the Government to

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exercise its right to extend its authority and sovereignty over all of its territory and by then transforming the South into a zone of peace." (A/45/709, para. 4, p. 7)

Year after year the General Assembly and the Security Council have expressed their keen desire to see the International Peace Conference convened. This is becoming even more urgent with the passage of time. In their communications with the Secretary-General some members of the Security Council have gone so far as to suggest the establishment of a preparatory committee to get the Conference under way.

Despite this nearly unanimous endorsement, the Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese face acute disappointment every year as Israel's refusal to take part is tolerated by the international community. This appeasement of Israel gives the impression that there are two yardsticks of international justice, one for Israel and one for the rest of the world.

Since December 1987 the demand for the Conference has been particularly strong, as the call for peace, compromise and an end to Israeli occupation has been championed by the children of the intifadah. I should like to remind the Assembly that this year, 1990, is the Year of the Child, but Palestinian children have yet to be granted their rights and the protection guaranteed by the Fourth Geneva Conference of 1949. Lebanon would therefore like to take this opportunity to request, once more, that a protecting authority under United Nations auspices should be established for the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The United Nations has thus far played a vital and intricate role in bringing peace to most of the world's nations once plagued by war and turmoil, and it is with great relief and satisfaction and also a certain degree of pride that this

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Assembly can view its successes. There are, of course, exceptions; not all the world's problems have been solved: the Arab-Israeli conflict is one example of this, and the occupation and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq is another. Fortunately for Lebanon's sister Arab State, Kuwait, however, salvation may yet lie just over the horizon, thanks to firm Security Council resolutions, resolution 678 (1990) in particular. Lebanon's position on this matter was made crystal clear by our Prime Minister, who said, from this rostrum, that

> "... we cannot [as a matter of principle] concede the right of the strong to swallow up the weak or of the large to ruin the small". (A/45/PV.17, p. 33)

Accordingly, there must be hope that the Security Council will be galvanized into using its power, as it did in adopting resolution 678 (1990), in order to rid Arab land of the scourge and affliction of Israeli occupation. After all, Israel has been occupying East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan for more than 23 years, and the southern part of my country, Lebanon, has been occupied for 12 years. Surely this blatant intransigence on Israel's part and its violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations cannot be allowed to stand, as it undermines the very structure and concept of international order.

I therefore ask this international Organization to put an end to Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon before that aggressor moves its people and settlements into my country as it has done in the other occupied Arab lands.

At this stage in the making of a peaceful world where diplomacy triumphs over war and the pen is mightier than the sword, the United Nations must face up to the challenge posed by Israel's prolonged violation of the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions, and, in the name of peace, put an end to Israel's transgressions.

(Mr. Makkawi, Lebanon)

One nation cannot defy the will of the whole international community, nor can it defy with impunity all the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions adopted against it. The time has come for the Council to give those resolutions teeth, to force Israel to comply and to prove that the Council is serious in its conviction that aggression in any form cannot stand.

If Israel does not see reason and abide by General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, this international Organization must look for ways to ensure Israel's compliance under Chapter VII of the Charter, in order to achieve a just and lasting peace and a solution to all the problems of the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Iraq, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. MOHAMMED (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): We had no illusions about the statement by the representative of the Zionist régime this morning. We have been accustomed to such ravings. It seems that the idea is to divert attention from facts which are known to all. Therefore, we did not expect the representative of the Zionist régime to make any sense or to say anything that would serve the cause of peace. All he did was to try, yet once again, to defame the Arab nation, and level wild accusations in every direction with the aim of "dividing and prevailing".

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

That was all he did in his statement, which was not even worth listening to or worth the valuable time of this Assembly.

As an Arab poet of olden times once said - and I hope that the interpreter captures the sense of this verse:

"If the vitriol comes from the mouth of iniquity,

"'Tis testimony I am perfect indeed!"

It is really ridiculous that the Zionist representative found no one to quote in promoting his claims that Iraq will acquire nuclear weapons except Israel's chief ally, the United States President Bush, who is searching for pretexts to commit aggression against Iraq. It might have been better for the Zionist representative if he had quoted the Zionist journalist, William Safire, who is more expert in the field of fabricating such lies.

The racist Zionist entity and its policies are the sole cause of all the suffering, tragedy and wars in our region over several decades. The Palestinian people has been the primary victim of expulsion, homelessness and killing at the hands of the Zionist terrorist gangs. All the facts and figures emphasize that Israel is an outlaw entity that shows no respect for codes of ethics or international conventions, and that it depends in its transgression of international law on the protection and support of the United States of America and its allies. It also depends on its military, nuclear, chemical and biological capabilities. Not only does Israel show contempt for the United Nations, but it also calls for the rescinding of United Nations resolutions and finds that it is an act of transgression on the part of the General Assembly to adopt any resolution on the Middle East because it is confident that its rejection of Security Council and other United Nations resolutions would never lead to the mobilization of armies and weapons of destruction, or to the imposition of any embargoes or indeed the threat

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

of obliteration if it did not pull out of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories.

Therefore, the Zionist terrorists persist in their aggression and their expansionist settlement policies. At this point in time, the Zionist enterprise is focusing on the implementation of the scheme to settle new Jewish immigrants who are being brought in to replace the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory. The implementation of the scheme requires the achievement of two objectives: the first being to crush the valiant intifadah of the Palestinian children, while the second is the elimination of Iraq, the Arab power that constitutes a hurdle in the way of the Zionist expansionist scheme. Hence, we witness the intensification of violence against the children of the intifadah. The massacre at the Al-Aqsa Mosque is further proof of that. Then there is the plotting and the threatened aggression against Iraq, which is another principal component of that grand design. That is why the Zionist representative focused on Iraq in his statement. This is not new. Past experience has taught us that the fever of plotting rises to a high pitch whenever any Arab power emerges and rises in the face of the Zionist grand designs of expansion. That is why the Zionists are doing their utmost to push the situation in the Arabian Gulf region towards explosion and military confrontation. This is specifically the trend that everyone must stand against given its devastating results for the whole region and the world at large.

However, that devastation and ruin are exactly what the Zionist terrorists want. We must remember how those very terrorists were distressed and saddened when the Iran-Iraq war came to an end, while the entire international community welcomed the ending of that war.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

In conclusion, let me say that the criminal Zionist enterprise which involves the extermination of the Palestinian people and the intended aggression against Iraq and the entire Arab nation will not succeed because the road to peace and security is the only path to stability and well-being. The key to resolving all the problems of the region lies in putting an end to the Zionist occupation of Arab lands and settling the question of Palestine, which has been without a solution for a long time, and the exerise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination, in particular the right to establish an independent Palestinian state with the holy city of Al-Quds as its capital, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole, legitimate representative.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I should like to make an announcement in regard to the tentative programme of work for next week.

As previously announced, on Monday, 10 December, in the morning, the Assembly will consider agenda item 35, "The situation in the Middle East", and agenda item 11, "Report of the Security Council".

On Monday, 10 December, in the afternoon, the Assembly will consider agenda item 117, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", which was originally scheduled for the morning of that day. On the same afternoon the Assembly will consider agenda item 17 (g), "Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences"; take action on the draft resolution relating to agenda item 25, "Co-operation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States"; and take up agenda item 41, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council".

(The President)

The programme of work for Tuesday, 11 December, remains unchanged. On that day the Assembly will consider agenda item 33, "Law of the Sea"; and, in the afternoon, immediately following consideration of that item, it will take up the reports of the Special Political Committee.

On Wednesday, 12 December, in the afternoon, the Assembly will take up agenda item 36, "Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)"; agenda item 37, "Question of peace, stability and co-operation in South-East Asia"; and the remaining First Committee reports.

On Thursday, 13 December, in the afternoon, the Assembly will take action on the draft resolutions relating to agenda item 34, "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa"; and agenda item 152, "Critical economic situation in Africa".

On Friday, 14 December, in the afternoon, it is my intention that the Assembly should take up the reports of the Third Committee.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.